

From the Editor

CULTURAL RESOURCE CONNECTIONS



I am delighted to present an article that focuses on cultural resource preservation as our cover story. Authors Mark Gilberg and Nan-Yao Su report on a relatively new termite treatment that is friendlier to the environment and more effective in the long term than many traditional termiticide applications. The study, a series of field trials in five units of the National Park System, is thorough and documents a viable alternative to deal with subterranean termites, a serious threat to our historic structures and objects. I am hopeful that the article will increase the awareness of this promising technique among cultural and natural resource managers and facility managers alike.

As always, in selecting an article for the cover I look for potentially broad applications of research, timely topics, less common subjects, or material that represents progress for the National Park Service. I also consider a subject's appeal, perhaps to a new or sporadic reader of *Park Science*. This article, which applies research to cultural resource preservation through manipulation of a natural resource, struck me as particularly intriguing.

Another link between cultural and natural resources is described in this issue's Highlights department. Resource and facility managers at Valley Forge National Historical Park have changed their traditional mowing operations that formerly managed 1,400 of the park's acres as lawn. Now, half of that acreage is allowed to grow into meadow, representing the historic landscape of the 18th century (see photo) and giving visitors a better visual approximation of the place George Washington used for the encampment of his troops.

Looking back to fall 1995, our cover article described a cultural-natural resource connection of another kind. The authors reported a technique used at Amistad National Recreation Area, Texas, to date rock art (pictographs) through chemical analysis of the paint. The process also identified natural crusts formed from bio-geo-chemical interactions among the rock substrate and paint that gradually cause the pictographs to appear faded. Through the application of natural sciences, the investigators improved the correspondence of the rock art to the cultures that produced them, enhancing resource interpretation and preservation.

There is opportunity for more of this kind of reporting in *Park Science* that explores relationships between cultural and natural resource management and the cultural and natural sciences. Even as many of us focus daily on preserving natural resources, our efforts contribute to the ecological integrity of a national park and the greatness of the National Park System, ideas that are culturally important. Or we may manage species (e.g., wildlife that symbolize the American wilderness or a particular time period), landforms (e.g., natural landmarks), or other phenomena (e.g., dark night skies) that are simultaneously natural and cultural resources. We may strive to understand the natural setting of a park that was important historically or prehistorically or the effect of natural processes (e.g., shoreline processes) on the preservation of cultural resources. Even cultural resource preservation can have implications for natural resources (e.g., armoring of forts and relocation of lighthouses).

Certainly, connections between cultural and natural resource management in the National Park System are abundant. Writing and reading about them encourages holistic thinking about the resources in our care and the scientific tools at our disposal. I invite you to share additional links among these resources in future issues of *Park Science*.


Jeff Selleck
Editor